United Nations A/64/479

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 October 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 8
General debate

Letter dated 30 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit herewith the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by Samuel Santos López, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, in the general debate, on 29 September 2009 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(*Signed*) John **Sawers**

09-54537 (E) 081009

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Annex to the letter dated 30 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua in the general debate on 29 September 2009

The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.

The British Government attaches great importance to the principle of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That principle underlies our position on the Falkland Islands.

The democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands once again expressed their own views clearly when they visited the United Nations for this year's debate in the Committee of 24.

They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other people, were entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. They reiterated that the people of the Falkland Islands did not wish for any change in the status of the Islands.

There can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the islanders so wish.

United Nations A/64/480

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 October 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 8
General debate

Letter dated 28 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by His Excellency Mr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, on 25 September 2009 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 8.

(*Signed*) John **Sawers**

09-54543 (E) 081009

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the Prime Minister of Mauritius in the general debate on 25 September 2009

The British Government maintains that the British Indian Ocean Territory is British and has been since 1814. It does not recognize the sovereignty claim of the Mauritian Government.

However, the British Government has recognized Mauritius has the only State which has a right to assert a claim of sovereignty when the United Kingdom relinquishes its own sovereignty.

Successive British Governments have given undertakings to the Government of Mauritius that the Territory will be ceded when no longer required for defence purposes.

The British Government remains open to discussions regarding arrangements governing the British Indian Ocean Territory or the future of the Territory. The British Government has stated that when the time comes for the Territory to be ceded it will liaise closely with the Government of Mauritius.

During recent meetings, British and Mauritian officials discussed the latest legal and policy developments relating to the British Indian Ocean Territory. Both delegations set out their respective positions on sovereignty. The United Kingdom also set out its need to abide by its treaty obligations with the United States and its ongoing need of the British Indian Ocean Territory for defence purposes. There was mutual discussion of fishing rights, the environment, the continental shelf and future visits to the Territory by Chagossians.

The British Government values its close and constructive cooperation with the Government of Mauritius on a wide range of issues and looks forward to this continuing.

United Nations A/64/481

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 October 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 8
General debate

Letter dated 28 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit herewith the written statement of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in exercise of its right of reply to the remarks made by the President of the Republic of Argentina in the general debate of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, on 23 September 2009 (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if you could arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(*Signed*) Mohammad **Khazaee**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-54549 (E) 081009

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

On Wednesday, 23 September 2009, the President of the Republic of Argentina repeated baseless allegations concerning the involvement of Iranian nationals in the 1994 bombing in Buenos Aires. While 15 years after from the reprehensible bombing there is still no prospect of justice to the bereaved families, the Argentine authorities continue to deflect their failure to bring the real criminals to justice by levelling baseless accusations against Iranian citizens and interfering in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran deplores this irresponsible position and categorically rejects those claims as totally baseless and unsubstantiated and as interference in its internal affairs. We would like here to confirm our position regarding this matter as outlined in our letter dated 28 September 2008, which was circulated as document A/63/468.

It is hardly understandable why the Argentine authorities insist on exposing to the world their judicial system's ineptitude and its vulnerability to outside and inside political pressures. The whole AMIA Case is marred by incompetence, manipulation, corruption and fabrication of false documents as well as political and third parties' influence. And the whole scenario to fabricate the involvement of Iranian citizens comes from totally unsubstantiated statements taken from dishonest fugitives and members of a notorious terrorist group. The testimony given by them is more than false; it is a shameless politically charged plot directed by third parties, which has no legal or factual significance before any independent court. The trumped-up charges which are based on blatantly mendacious testimonies, coupled with piles of utterly absurd inferences and presumptions and invented assertions by the ousted Judge Galeano, are, then, so plainly incongruous that they only have served to discredit Argentina's judicial system and tarnish its integrity and efficiency. The plot is a mockery of justice, in short. It shows how badly Argentina's judicial system is influenced by certain circles and foreign Governments and reduced to a political tool against Iran. It indicates the existence of strong anti-Muslim sentiments in Argentine policy, as well, which has also been manifested in systematic persecution of Muslims and violation of their basic human rights, and which the Government needs to be alerted against.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran resolves to restore the reputation of its innocent citizens harmed by irresponsible allegations and shameless fabrications. In this context, those who collaborated in dishonouring the Iranian nationals by levelling unsubstantiated allegations against them shall be held accountable. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its position as articulated in paragraph 4 of the annex to its letter dated 28 September 2008 (A/63/468).

As a long-standing victim of terrorism, the Islamic Republic of Iran sympathizes with all victims of terrorism, including those innocent people killed in the AMIA building. The AMIA case, for sure, is an open wound for Argentina; and it will not heal until and unless the Argentine judicial and political authorities shoulder their responsibilities to truly pursue justice and put an end to the wrong path they have taken by unfoundedly accusing those who were absolutely unrelated to the criminal act.

United Nations A/64/482

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 October 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 136

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Yuliana Zhivkova **Georgieva** (Bulgaria)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-fourth session the item entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered agenda item 136 at its 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, from 5 to 7 October 2009. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/64/SR.2-4). An addendum to the present report will reflect further consideration of the item by the Committee during the sixty-fourth session.

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee on Contributions;[1]

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on multi-year payment plans (A/64/68).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/64/L.2

4. At its 4th meeting, on 7 October, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter" (A/C.5/64/L.2), which was submitted by the representative of Thailand and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/64/L.2 without a vote (see para. 6).

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 11* (A/64/11).

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III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter

The General Assembly,

Having considered chapter V of the report of the Committee on Contributions on its sixty-ninth session,[2]

Reaffirming the obligation of Member States under Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations to bear the expenses of the Organization as apportioned by the General Assembly,

1. *Reaffirms* its role in accordance with the provisions of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations and the advisory role of the Committee on Contributions in accordance with rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

2. *Also reaffirms* its resolution 54/237 C of 23 December 1999;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to bring to the attention of Member States the deadline specified in resolution 54/237 C, including through an early announcement in the *Journal of the United Nations* and through direct communication;

4. *Urges* all Member States requesting exemption under Article 19 of the Charter to submit as much information as possible in support of their requests and to consider submitting such information in advance of the deadline specified in resolution 54/237 C so as to enable the collation of any additional detailed information that may be necessary;

5. *Agrees* that the failure of the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia to pay the full minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 of the Charter was due to conditions beyond their control;

6. *Decides* that the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia shall be permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its sixty-fourth session.

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[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 11* (A/64/11).

United Nations A/64/483–S/2009/512

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
7 October 2009

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session
Agenda items 9 and 12

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Report of the Security Council

Prevention of armed conflict

Identical letters dated 6 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I would like to refer to resolution 1889 (2009) that was adopted by the Security Council on 5 October 2009 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

Malta supports the overall thrust of resolution 1889 (2009). At the same time, Malta would like to register its reservation on that part of paragraph 10 of the resolution relating to "health services, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights".

Malta maintains that any position taken or recommendation regarding women's empowerment and gender equality should not in any way create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health rights, services or commodities. Any discussion of rights and services in connection with reproductive health cannot take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental of human rights — the right to life. Malta strongly believes that the right to life extends to the unborn child from the moment of conception, and that therefore the use of abortion as a means of resolving health or social problems is a denial of that right.

Malta therefore disassociates itself from and considers invalid all statements or decisions which use references to sexual and reproductive health, directly or indirectly, to impose obligations on anyone to accept abortion as a right, service or commodity that may exist outside the ambit of national legislation. It is also the understanding of my delegation that any future reference to Security Council resolution 1889 (2009) will also reflect the reservations outlined above.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 9 and 12, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Saviour F. **Borg**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-54715 (E) 071009

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United Nations A/64/484

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 October 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 135
Pattern of conferences

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/64/136). The Committee also had before it the draft report of the Committee on Conferences for 2009,* as well as the text of a draft resolution on the pattern of conferences. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. The report of the Secretary-General, which was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/248, covers the utilization of conference-servicing resources, the impact of the capital master plan, integrated global management and various issues pertaining to documentation, translation and interpretation. The report also outlines progress made in the implementation of specific initiatives related to the improvement of conference services, proposes means to address current challenges and puts forward suggestions as to further steps that could be taken to ensure the optimal functioning of the management of conferences at the United Nations.

3. The Advisory Committee has already commented in some detail on matters relating to conference servicing in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/64/7). **Therefore, the present report should be considered in conjunction with that report.**

Integrated global management

4. Issues relating to integrated global management are discussed in paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Secretary-General's report. During the reporting period, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, at the request of the Under-Secretary-General for

* The final version of the report of the Committee on Conferences will be issued as document A/64/32.

09-54968 (E) 121009

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General Assembly and Conference Management, undertook an evaluation of the progress achieved in integrated global management with a view, in particular, to examining the extent to which the process had yielded measurable gains in terms of improved coherence of delivery and/or financial savings (see A/63/509, para. 8, and A/64/7, para. I.60). The outcome of that evaluation is contained in document A/64/166.

5. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, the Advisory Committee reiterated its support for the concept of integrated global management as a means of maximizing the efficient use of resources and improving the overall quality of conference services. However, the Committee also noted that the budget document submitted by the Secretary-General did not contain any information about the financial savings achieved or anticipated as a result of its implementation (see A/64/7, para. I.59). At that time, the Committee was informed that, rather than to generate savings, the main objective of integrated global management was to improve and harmonize work processes across the conference-servicing duty stations, thereby increasing quality, efficiency and effectiveness (ibid.).

6. During its consideration of the Secretary-General's report, the Advisory Committee, bearing in mind both the specific focus of the evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see para. 4 above) and the various General Assembly resolutions calling on the Department to achieve its objectives as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible (see, inter alia, resolutions 59/265, 62/225 and 63/248), once again enquired as to the measurable financial savings yielded as a result of the implementation of integrated global management. It was reiterated to the Committee that the pursuit of financial savings had never been the main objective of integrated global management and that, although the potential benefits of harmonization, economies of scale and simplification of processes all pointed to more efficiency, benefits such as better succession planning, global outreach, policy coherence, better quality of service, more timely availability of parliamentary documents and advance waiver management did not lend themselves to easy quantification in financial terms.

7. In that connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, in its above-mentioned first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, it discussed the issue of cost-accounting and noted, inter alia, that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had already developed a costing model and tools to quantify conference-servicing costs (see A/64/7, para. I.63). In fact, annex I to the Secretary-General's report on the pattern of conferences contains a performance matrix for the Department, which includes notional unit costs for outputs and services. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the costing model used by the Department had been in place since the 1980s and had last been updated in 2003. The Department intended to review and further refine the model and, in collaboration with the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, to update the underlying unit costs.

8. **The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that better knowledge of the costs of activities would be advantageous and would provide a better basis for assessing the efficiency of administrative functions, the cost-effectiveness of work processes and the impact of new administrative systems (see A/64/7, para. I.62), thereby enabling the Department's managers to determine the most**

effective ways to implement mandates. Therefore, the Committee also reiterates its earlier recommendation that the Department's existing methodologies for the collection and analysis of costing information be further developed (ibid., para. I.64).

9. The Advisory Committee notes the status report on integrated global management contained in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Secretary-General's report, in which the Secretary-General states that the Department is in broad agreement with the findings and recommendations of the evaluation undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. **In order to enhance the likelihood that measures taken within the framework of integrated global management will further contribute to improving the Department's performance, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General's next report on the pattern of conferences outline the specific steps taken to implement the findings and recommendations that have been accepted.**

10. On a related matter, in paragraph 10 of his report, the Secretary-General provides a status update on the three information technology projects that are to provide the management tools indispensable for the full implementation of integrated global management. In this regard, the Advisory Committee notes that project 3, document planning and management, has encountered challenges owing to the disparity of the working methods and current systems used in the various duty stations, differences in predictability of workload and uncertainty as to the nature of the overall information technology architecture and the platform to be adopted throughout the United Nations. The Committee further notes that, on the advice of the Chief Information Technology Officer, it was agreed to re-engineer the next iteration of project 3 on the basis of a thoroughly reorganized documents management workflow currently being developed by the Meetings and Publishing Division and on the adoption by the Department of the Documentum information technology platform, consistent with the Office of Information and Communications Technology decision for the United Nations as a whole. Project 3 will thus require further redesigning and implementation in 2010.

11. **The Advisory Committee is disappointed to learn that, after having spent several years working on project 3, the Department will, in essence, have to start again from the beginning. The Committee urges the Department, in designing and implementing the next iteration of project 3, to cooperate closely with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to ensure, in particular, that the selected platform fully meets the needs of all conference-servicing duty stations and that it is compatible with other relevant applications Organization-wide.**

Capital master plan

12. Paragraphs 53 to 59 of the Secretary-General's report address the impact of the capital master plan on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation. According to the Secretary-General, one of the challenges the Department will face during the renovation of the Headquarters complex is the fact that staff servicing meetings in the conference rooms will be based in swing space at 300 East 42nd Street. As only a minimum level of staffing can be maintained in the Temporary North Lawn Building due to space restrictions, the majority of staff will have to travel constantly from their off-site locations, up to nine blocks away from the

Headquarters complex, to the Conference Building and back. In his report, the Secretary-General also outlines the arrangements for ensuring the ongoing provision of a full range of technical support to staff located in temporary swing space. He points out that, as neither storage space to facilitate prompt access to stock items nor office space to accommodate rotational support staff has been made available to any of the new locations, the ability of the Help Desk and the Stock and Inventory Group to provide the required services will undoubtedly be tested.

13. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Department has more than a dozen mission-critical systems which will be expected to operate smoothly with continued maintenance and support by the Information and Communications Technology Section during the construction period (see A/63/509, para. 16). **The Committee therefore stresses, once again, the importance of ensuring that proper support is provided throughout the capital master plan to ensure uninterrupted service.**

Documents management

14. The Advisory Committee notes that, as at 30 June 2009, the overall compliance with submission guidelines for pre-session documentation had risen to 71 per cent, which is higher than in 2007 (61 per cent) and on a par with 2008. At the same time, overall compliance with issuance time frames increased to 73 per cent, up from 66 per cent in 2007 and 72 per cent in 2008. According to the Secretary-General, further improvement is contingent on more timely submission of documents, adequate intervals between the adoption of new mandates by intergovernmental bodies and the time of consideration of the relevant documents, and the length of budgetary and performance reports, since such reports have been exempt from page-limit requirements. The Secretary-General points out that the latter reports have often proved to be very disruptive to documentation processing, since priority is accorded to their issuance at the expense of other documents already in the pipeline.

15. In this regard, the Advisory Committee notes that the Department continues to work closely with committee secretaries to synchronize the programme of work of intergovernmental bodies with the availability of documents. In this connection, and pursuant to section IV of General Assembly resolution 63/248, particular attention has been devoted to ways and means of improving the timely submission of documents to the Fifth Committee (see A/63/735). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, while there was little in the way of incentives to encourage author departments to submit documents in a more timely fashion, the Department was focusing on raising awareness of the work involved in documents processing in the hope that greater understanding among author departments would lead to better compliance with the time frames and page limits set out in the relevant General Assembly resolutions. **The Committee stresses that the timely submission of documentation is key to the effective implementation of the Department's mandate and therefore urges all author departments to comply with submission deadlines and page-limit requirements.**

16. The specific challenges associated with the continuing development of the activities of the Human Rights Council are described in paragraphs 67 to 71 of the Secretary-General's report. In particular, the Secretary-General points out that, on 18 June 2009, the Human Rights Council took a decision in which it recalled that the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review was entrusted with the

authority to decide on the adoption of reports that exceptionally exceeded the word limits previously established by the Council (see A/64/53, chap. I, decision 11/117). The Secretary-General further indicates that 13 outcome documents of the Council's universal periodic review process which, according to the Department, far exceeded the allowable length were delivered to the Division of Conference Management for processing long after the slotting deadline had passed. Since the Division could not process those documents on time due to other commitments, the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management declined the waiver request.

17. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Division of Conference Management at Geneva had translated all the universal periodic review documents that had been submitted on time and within the established word limits; it was those submitted after the slotting deadline and in excess of the allowable length that had not been translated, since capacity was planned in accordance with the documents submission schedule. The Committee was also informed that the Department's decision to prioritize the processing of reports of the above-mentioned Working Group had led to the creation of a backlog of summary records of the proceedings of the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies amounting to some 5 million words. It was not made clear to the Committee how that backlog would be addressed.

18. As indicated in paragraph 69 of the Secretary-General's report, on 24 June 2009 the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management requested the Office of Legal Affairs to provide a legal opinion on whether the Human Rights Council, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, could grant one of its intergovernmental working groups — the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — the authority to decide upon its own word limits for the reports that it adopts. In the opinion, a copy of which was provided, upon request, to the Advisory Committee, the Office of Legal Affairs concluded that the decision of 18 June 2009 did not contain wording that granted the Working Group the authority to adopt reports that exceeded the 32-page limit established by the General Assembly for its subsidiary organs and intergovernmental bodies (see inter alia, General Assembly resolutions 51/211, 52/214, 53/208 and 59/265). The Office therefore opined that approval by the General Assembly of the decision of 18 June 2009 should be subject to the express understanding by the Assembly that the 32-page limit it has established would continue to apply to all reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. According to the Office, any decision by the General Assembly that left room for doubt as to the authority of the Working Group to exceed the 32-page limit could require the Secretariat to edit and translate reports that exceeded that limit, a situation that would have significant financial implications for the Organization.

19. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in order to strengthen conference-servicing capacity in Geneva, and in particular to address the additional requirements generated by the activities of the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies, the Secretary-General, in section 2 of his proposed programme budget for 2010-2011, is proposing to redeploy 12 posts (6 P-2 Associate Translators and 6 P-3 posts from the Copy Preparation and Proofreading Section) from New York to Geneva and to increase the level of resources allocated for temporary assistance for meetings (see A/64/7, para. 1.89). **The Committee reaffirms its support for those proposals. However, in view of its ongoing**

concerns about the adequacy of the additional capacity proposed, the Committee also reiterates its recommendation that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to monitor the situation closely and to report to it on any developments that might have financial implications (ibid.).

Matters related to translation and interpretation

20. Paragraphs 72 to 75 of the Secretary-General's report describe the measures taken and envisaged to address the demographic transition in the language services, which include increasing the number of competitive examinations for language staff and further pursuing the outreach programme that was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/225. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, to date, memorandums of understanding on the training of potential candidates for language examinations had been signed with 12 universities covering all six official languages. The Department expected to sign further memorandums in the coming months.

21. In paragraph 75 of his report, the Secretary-General states that, given the continuing high number of retirements anticipated in the coming years, the issue of raising, or waiving, the mandatory age of separation for language staff is worthy of consideration. **In the Advisory Committee's view, the financial and administrative implications of raising or waiving the age of separation for one category of staff should be thoroughly explored, including from the perspective of equality of treatment, before a formal proposal is made.**

22. The long-standing question of how to fill current and future vacancies at the United Nations Office at Nairobi is addressed in paragraphs 87 to 89 of the Secretary-General's report. The Committee notes, in particular, that in order to attract additional language staff to Nairobi and to ensure that current staff show a willingness to stay, the Division of Conference Services would like to classify some interpreter and translator posts in Nairobi at a higher level. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that other incentives were also being considered, such as giving staff who had served in Nairobi for a certain number of years priority consideration for lateral transfers to other duty stations.

23. The Advisory Committee further notes that, during the reporting period, the services of a consultant were engaged to explore the possibility of providing enhanced training programmes to potential professional translators and interpreters on the African continent, thereby ensuring that there would be a pool of qualified language staff available in Africa to fill vacancies in Nairobi. On the basis of the recommendations contained in the consultant's report, a conference, bringing together the main stakeholders, was held in Nairobi in February 2009. The outcome of the conference was unanimous agreement on the way forward, offers of support for training by a number of European Union institutions and a commitment by the African Development Bank to find appropriate funding for the project. A core group of African universities is currently working together to come up with a common approach to establishing relevant master's degree programmes. Nairobi University is due to pilot the programme in September 2009.

24. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the proactive approach to staffing adopted by the Division of Conference Services in Nairobi and trusts that it will yield concrete results. Detailed information on the impact of the measures**

taken on vacancy rates among language staff serving in Nairobi should be included in the Secretary-General's next report on the pattern of conferences.

25. In paragraphs 76 to 80 of his report, the Secretary-General describes the steps taken, pursuant to section V, paragraph 13, of General Assembly resolution 62/225, to provide at all duty stations adequate staff at the appropriate grade level with a view to ensuring appropriate quality control for external translation. In particular, for the biennium 2010-2011, the Secretary-General is proposing to reclassify five P-4 Reviser posts to P-5 Senior Reviser posts at the United Nations Office at Vienna (see A/64/6 (Sect. 2), para. 2.79). In paragraph 78 of his report, the Secretary-General asserts that the proposal is cost neutral, and potentially even cost saving, since the increase in staff costs will be offset by the savings arising from a higher number of pages translated contractually rather than in-house. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that a total of 12 new P-5 Senior Reviser posts were approved and established during the biennium 2008-2009 (7 in the Documentation Division at Headquarters and 5 in the Languages Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva).

26. The Advisory Committee also notes from paragraph 80 of the report that the Department has continued its work on the common roster of contractual translators. Unified criteria for inclusion, evaluation and removal of translators and text-processors into or from the common roster were agreed upon at the coordination meeting of conference managers held in June 2009 and the standardized electronic template for quality control evaluation is in use. **The Advisory Committee notes the steps taken to respond to the General Assembly's requests concerning quality control for external translation and trusts that they will yield the expected results by helping to ensure the provision of language services of the highest quality.**

27. In paragraphs 81 to 86 of his report, the Secretary-General discusses the impact of freelance recruitment on the quality of interpretation at all duty stations. According to the Secretary-General, the principal factor affecting the quality of interpretation is the limited availability of interpreters on both the local and international markets. He states, in particular, that competition among international organizations and among duty stations is fierce and can, at times, lead to the recruitment of interpreters of less than optimal quality solely to meet demand. **In this connection, while the Advisory Committee understands that meeting cancellations or last-minute additions to the calendar of conferences and meetings cannot always be foreseen, it nevertheless stresses the importance of robust workload planning as a means of ensuring that adequate numbers of freelance interpreters who can perform to the required standard are recruited sufficiently in advance.**

United Nations A/64/485

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda items 70 and 70 (a)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Letter dated 5 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure, in my capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, to enclose herewith the statement issued by the Chair of the Coordinating Bureau on the powerful earthquake that struck West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, on 30 September 2009 (see annex).

I kindly request that the above-mentioned statement be circulated as a document of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 70 and 70 (a).

(*Signed*) Maged **Abdelaziz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-55155 (E) 091009

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Annex to the letter dated 5 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement dated 1 October 2009 by the Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on the powerful earthquake that struck West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, on 30 September 2009

The Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement expresses deep condolences, sympathies and solidarity with the Government and the people of Indonesia on the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck off the coast of Sumatra at 17:16 local time (10:16 GMT), on 30 September 2009, particularly as preliminary data indicate that the powerful earthquake has caused at least 700 lives, hundreds have sustained serious injuries and thousands have been trapped in collapsed buildings. More than 500 buildings, including 2 main hospitals and other public facilities, have been seriously damaged.

The Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement commends the quick response by the Government of Indonesia in mobilizing all available resources to save the victims of the earthquake and encourages United Nations member countries and United Nations humanitarian entities, relevant humanitarian organizations and humanitarian relief and assistance organizations, as well as the donor community, to respond positively to the position of the Government of Indonesia, which is open to receiving international assistance in support of its national efforts.